

And that was when the company even bothered. For Chico attorney Ken Royce over the previous several decades had recurrently sued PG&E over various fires it ignited in Butte and neighboring counties. During which proceedings it emerged PG&E wasn't devoting a lot of attention to tower maintenance, or to clearing vegetation around its lines. In the settlements to these lawsuits would routinely be provisos that in these areas PG&E would henceforth do better. Until there was the next fire, and the next lawsuit, and the next discovery that the company, contrary to promises, really hadn't done better, much at all.

On that morning, Nov. 8, 2018, on one of those 100-plus-year-old towers, out in the bumfuck near Pulga, was a big hunk of curved steel called a C-hook that the second law of thermodynamics had for years been bringing to Fail. It was, that day, worn through. If some "negative cash flow" had been assigned to shinny up that tower, and there regarded it—Seen, the thing itself—its failure would have been apparent. And then, presumably, it would have been replaced.

But. No. That did not happen.

Instead, what happened, that morning, is that high winds came up out of the Feather River Canyon—"Jarbo Winds," they're sometimes called; winds that swirl around the high Sierra, seeking to mate with the California coast, achieving passage through a narrow chasm the white people call Jarbo Gap. Generally, these winds, though high-stepping, are benign. When they have water on them. But there was no water on them this day. There had been from the skies hereabouts no water in any measurable amount since May. And, down on the earth, most everyone who was a plant, was tinder—literally—dry. The Jarbo Winds, that morning, blew that C-hook, into complete Fail; it broke, dropping a wire, which also broke; and then the electricity, from out of the wire, it commenced to spark. In the tinder. Dry.

Fire. On the mountain.

The nascent flames found, frolicked through, a vast stretch of logger slob; great yawning acres where the tree-cutters had taken what they wilt, and then, as is their wont, left their lazy-ass sloppy firestarter slash all behind. And the newborn fire, it exulted, in this fuel. Whipped by the winds, sucking its life from the logger detritus, the fire danced into Concow.

The native peoples of Concow knowing of fire from time into mist; in one story, in their oral tradition, wildfire takes all of their people, every one, but one man, and one woman, who, in the after of the ashes, arise the tribe anew.

This time, the fire came for an aged man, who sent his family away, but stayed behind himself, to try to find his cat. He burned. As did his cat. Another Concow man tried to



The lion may not have lain down with the lamb, but the doe hung out with the cat. The cat is Milo. He went missing in the fire. Probably the doe did too.

PHOTO CIRCULATED ON SOCIAL MEDIA POST-CAMP FIRE

flee from the fire in his car. Didn't work. For the fire burned faster than any car. Later they managed to scrape his remains out of the car. But not those of his dog, which were melted to the seat. Another man tried to run from the fire. No. The fire took him where he ran.

A Concow grandmother, the fire bearing down upon her, pleading on the phone with the authorities for help, was told to jump in the lake. Literally. Just get in the water, she was told. And stay there. We'll come for you, when we can. And that happened. Eventually.

But Concow, that was just an appetizer, for this fire. What it was really about, was Paradise. And by the time it entered this town, the fire, it was a wall. And long before sundown the whole town, some 95 percent of it, would simply be gone. Burned. Away.

This being the day, that the shining city on a hill, that was Paradise, became the burned down city on a hill.

Paradise was founded by white people who came to this hither from yon for the gold. To this day in this town is celebrated Gold Nugget Days, remembering when some white-people miner unearthed up in the hills a hernia-inducing 54-pound ultra-nugget and brought it down to the ur-town athwart a burdened donkey.

The native peoples of the region had cared not for gold—what good was that shit?—but the white people, they were all about it. So they came, they dug, they scabbled, they sifted, they sieved, they firehosed, they exploded. And, they built shit. They put up stores,

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Unmet Transit Needs (UTN) Comment Period Open!




Comments for the 2023/2024 Transit Needs Assessment are being accepted!

The UTN process works to ensure all unmet needs reasonable to meet are done so prior to funds being spent on alternate projects. This includes trips required, especially by those dependent on public transit, but not currently provided within Butte County. Submit comments via mail, email, phone, online form or in person at the BCAG office or at the **UTN Public Hearing at 9:00 a.m. on December 7, 2023.** Call (530) 809-4616 or email info@bcag.org for more information about the process or location.

Any member of the public can submit a comment
by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 7, 2023.

You are invited!

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Deadlines to be considered for December print issue:
November 16 (guest comment) and November 20 (letters).

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